

Is Your Gardener a Green Gardener?

Your landscaping provides more than curb appeal; it creates an outdoor living space that can have a big impact on the environment, your water consumption, and your family's health. Planting and maintaining a healthy and sustainable garden is easy when you hire a Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener.

Cupertino resident Karen Reed hired Green Gardener Heidi Johnson to design her California native drought-resistant front yard, and Green Gardener Dominique Lala to install it. "I couldn't be happier," says Reed of her new landscape. "It is so low maintenance! We only water 45 minutes once a week using a drip system." Although it is too soon to compare water savings from last year, she received a rebate for replacing her lawn from Santa Clara Valley Water District for immediate savings.

Meanwhile, Reed is enjoying other benefits from the new landscaping. "We had flowers all winter long. There's such a variety of color and always something blooming." Reed's garden was featured in the April 2011 California Native Garden tour. While Reed enjoys the positive feedback she receives from tour participants and neighbors, perhaps the biggest compliment has come from nature, "We see so many more bees and butterflies now."

If you don't already have a gardener, hire a "**Green Gardener**" – a complete list of trained Green Gardeners is available at www.mywatershedwatch.org. If you like your current gardener and are interested in having them implement more sustainable gardening practices, ask them to attend the upcoming Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener training. You might even be helping them to grow their business.

After completing the training, your gardener will be ready to use sustainable landscaping practices, such as grass-cycling, seasonal irrigation controller programming, integrated pest management, mulching and more. Your gardener will also be able to select the right plants based on your local garden conditions. Planting the right plant in the right place significantly reduces water and pesticide use.

Being a Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener has its advantages. Landscape professionals who complete this 10-week course enjoy the title of Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener and all the perks that come with it, including opportunities for continuing education, and promotion on the Watershed Watch Campaign website and outreach materials. Karen Reed found her Green Gardeners through this list as a referral from the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

If you enjoy spending time outside, entertaining outdoors, or have a pet or child who frequently plays out in the yard, you will appreciate the health and safety benefits from reduced use of toxic pesticides and chemicals. Healthier gardens, plants, trees and lawns are the immediate evidence of the Green Gardener advantage, while

cleaner air, cleaner creeks and reduced runoff pollution are less obvious but major long-term rewards.

Ask your gardener to sign-up for the upcoming Green Gardener training. Classes begin on September 14, 2011 and will be held at Sunnyvale-Cupertino Adult Community Education Center. Classes will be offered in Spanish and English. To sign up for a class, call ACE registration at (408) 522-2713. Due to scholarships offered by the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program, the training cost is only \$ 40 for professional landscape design and maintenance workers.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener Program

Classes are taught by Master Gardeners, and are currently offered in cooperation with Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Sunnyvale, through funding provided by the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP).

The 10-week training program is designed for landscape maintenance workers, landscape contractors, and professional gardeners. The training, conducted in separate English and Spanish sessions, includes topics like irrigation scheduling and troubleshooting, plant placement, pruning, mulching, compost, fertilizers, air quality and integrated pest management practices to reduce the need for pesticide use. All gardeners who complete the required hours of attendance and successfully complete the final test will receive a Santa Clara Valley Green Gardener card and certificate of completion. Names of the graduates and companies they work for will appear on the Green Gardner website and will also be listed on distribution materials to the public.

Since April 2008, the program has successfully graduated over 70 landscape maintenance professionals. (See www.MyWatershedWatch.org for a list of current Green Gardeners.)

About SCVURPPP

SCVURPPP is an association of 13 cities and towns in Santa Clara Valley, the County of Santa Clara and the Santa Clara Valley Water District who share a common permit to discharge storm water to South San Francisco Bay.

About Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County

Master Gardeners is a volunteer organization that supports the educational activities of the University of California Cooperative Extension and operates for scientific and educational purposes, promoting horticultural education and service to the community and provide continuing horticulture enrichment for its members.